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Celebrate National Public Health Week April 1-7
Public Health is ROI: Save Money. Save Lives.

2013 County Health Rankings Detail Health Disparities in the Healthiest State

MIDDLEBURY – Vermont has been ranked #1 healthiest in *America's Health Rankings* for many years in a row. But Vermonters are not equally healthy, as reported in the latest *County Health Rankings* by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Now available at www.countyhealthrankings.org, the 2013 report ranks Chittenden County as the healthiest in the state, and Essex and Orleans Counties as least healthy. The rankings are based on health outcomes – length of life and quality of life – and health factors such as smoking, alcohol use, physical activity, access to quality health care, income, education, employment and the built environment.

“Addison County is the second healthiest county in the healthiest state in the country,” said Moira Cook, director for the Middlebury district office of the Health Department. “This is great news but we still have work to do. Too many Addison County residents are smoking and aren’t getting enough physical activity.”

To improve the health of Addison County residents, the Vermont Department of Health is working with small, independent retailers to promote healthier foods, partnering with schools and childcare providers to improve the quality of lunches and snacks, providing nutrition education through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and promoting smoking cessation resources.

“We are focusing on initiatives that hopefully have lasting change. The Health Department hopes that everyone considers Public Health Week, April 1-7, to be an opportunity to kick off a new, healthy behavior,” said Cook.

Among the findings in the 2013 *County Health Rankings*:

- 10% of adults in Addison County report poor or fair health, compared to 8% of adults in Chittenden County.
- 16% of adults in Addison County smoke, compared to 12% in Chittenden County.

- 19% of adults in Addison County report they are physically inactive, compared to 15% in Chittenden County.
- 1% report limited access to healthy foods in Addison County, compared to 4% in Chittenden County.

The *County Health Rankings* rank the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states. Nationally, the data revealed that unhealthy counties have more than twice the rate of premature deaths than healthy ones and childhood poverty rates are twice as high in unhealthy counties. The *Rankings* allow counties to see how they compare to other counties within the state based on a range of factors that influence health.

Celebrate Health during National Public Health Week

During National Public Health Week April 1-7, the Vermont Department of Health will highlight the daily work of public health, and will launch *Healthy Vermonters 2020* – the state health assessment that documents the health status of Vermonters at the start of the decade, and sets the goals that will guide the work of public health through 2020.

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